

RETRAINING INTERVIEW GUIDE

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13. ABSTRACT (Maximum 200 Words) This is an update to the Retraining Interview Guide, AFLMA Project LC870735, developed in 1987 to evaluate candidates aspiring to enter the contracting career field. The retraining program is one of the preferred methods to satisfactorily meet personnel requirements. As established by Note 550 of the USAF Retraining Advisory, retraining candidates must be personally interviewed by squadron superintendents, or other personnel assigned by the commander, to be retrained into the contracting career field. The purpose of the interview is to evaluate contracting prerequisites that can't be validated from the applicant's personnel records. Considering the increased complexity of operational contracting and the Air Force's implementation of the Acquisition Personnel Development Program (APDP), it is imperative that we recommend only the best qualified applicants for retraining. To accomplish this goal, it is necessary that we know as much about the applicants as possible. Although it may be possible to have an applicant answer many questions on a form letter, we need to rely more on the personal interview, as resumes and questionnaires have a tendency to look and sound alike. The objective of this guide is to help contracting superintendents make an informed decision about which retraining candidates are best qualified to enter the demanding contracting career field.				
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JOSE R. MEDINA, MSgt, USAF
Project Manager

FOREWORD

Voluntary separation incentives, special separation benefits, and 15 year retirement programs have allowed manning in the contracting career field to be lowered further than originally planned by the Air Force. Filling the personnel shortage left by this restructuring process, which started back in 1990, has been and will continue to be one of the major responsibilities of major command and squadron superintendents across the Air Force.

The retraining program is one of the preferred methods to satisfactorily meet these personnel requirements. As established by Note 550 of the USAF Retraining Advisory, retraining candidates must be personally interviewed by squadron superintendents, or other personnel assigned by the commander, to be retrained into the contracting career field. The purpose of the interview is to evaluate contracting prerequisites that can't be validated from the applicant's personnel records.

Considering the increased complexity of operational contracting and the Air Force's implementation of the Acquisition Personnel Development Program (APDP), it is imperative that we recommend only the best qualified applicants for retraining. To accomplish this goal, it is necessary to know as much about the applicant as possible.

We review their records, have them complete and return a resume/questionnaire, talk with their previous supervisors (if possible), and compare their known qualifications to the minimum requirements established by Air Force Manual 36-2108, Airman Classification. All this information is helpful to determine if an applicant is qualified to retrain into the contracting career field. However, a number of things we won't be able to learn from the retraining candidates by relying only on the written word includes their:

- * Speaking ability
- * Writing ability
- * Reasoning ability
- * Composure
- * General appearance
- * Reason for retraining
- * Reason for selecting contracting
- * Perception of contracting
- * Job expectations
- * Knowledge of the importance of supervision
- * Experience working with and for civilians
- * Strengths and weaknesses

Although it may be possible to have an applicant answer many questions of this nature on a form letter, we need to rely more on the personal interview, as resumes and questionnaires have a tendency to look and sound alike.

So why is it important that you conduct a thorough and professional interview? You owe it to the Air Force, the contracting career field, the people working for you, your customers, and finally to yourself, to ensure only the best are recommended for retraining. Now that we have a better understanding of the importance of the interview, let's take a look at the administrative process of retraining and where we fit in.

The objective of this guide is not to make you a professional interviewer, but to help you make an informed decision about which retraining candidates are best qualified to retrain into the demanding contracting career field.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

The interview is the most crucial step in the selection of candidates aiming to retrain into the contracting career field. No application, resume or recommendation have the impact of a personal meeting with an applicant. And the decision you make based on the interview can affect your organization and the contracting career field for years to come.

As a hiring method, the interview has a number of advantages:

- a. It's the most readily available way of taking account of the candidate's attitudes, interests, preferences, and personality.
- b. Gives you, the interviewer, the opportunity to verify, substantiate and meld together the miscellaneous information you may have already gathered about the candidate from other sources.
- c. Provides you with a picture of the candidate as a living functional human being.
- d. Brings about a more "rounded" assessment of the candidate (whole person concept).

On the other hand, several disadvantages also exist:

- a. It's time consuming.
- b. The result of the interview risks being no more than the interviewer's impression, influenced by his personal preferences and prejudices, and may or may not have validity in relation to the candidate's subsequent progress.
- c. It's extremely subjective.
- d. Its information and conclusions are difficult to record precisely.
- e. There are possible legal ramifications.

You can best counter these deficiencies of the interview process by devoting greater care to its conduct and by using suitable and convenient aids (questionnaires, reference checks, etc.)

A selection interview must be accomplished to recruit the best personnel available for retraining into the contracting career field. It may have several, and sometimes all, of the following goals:

- a. To give the candidate information about the job.
- b. To obtain or check basic facts about the candidate.
- c. To permit observation of the candidate's outward appearance/manner.
- d. To test, by oral question and answer, his/her capacities as relevant to the job.
- e. To enable an assessment to be made of his/her personality (using this term in the most general sense to include both intelligence and personal qualities).

CHAPTER 2

THE RETRAINING PROCESS

MILITARY PERSONNEL FLIGHT'S (MPF'S) ROLE

Upon receipt of a request for retraining, the Customer Service Element (CSE) of the MPF will check the applicant's Total Active Federal Military Service (TAFMS), to make sure first term airmen have between 35 to 38 months for four year enlistees, and 59 to 62 months for six year enlistees. For second termers, they will verify the requester is coming from an overage career field. CSE will then refer qualifying candidates to the USAF Retraining Advisory to select available retraining AFSC's. Customer Service personnel will then obtain copies of the last three EPRs and a Retraining Eligibility RIP. After making sure the member is not on a control roster or the weight management program, the personnel specialist will set a retraining appointment for the applicant.

During the retraining meeting, the candidate will select the career field he/she wishes to retrain into. The applicant is then counseled on the following issues: Selective Reenlistment Bonus, overseas imbalance positions, member's responsibilities in regards to retraining, medical prerequisites, and also on the contracting specialty qualifications required by Air Force Manual 36-2108, Airman Classification, attachment 38, dated 31 Oct 94. Members who do not meet minimum test scores (GEN - 70), will be referred to Promotions and Testing for re-testing. Once all the personnel paperwork is completed, the aspirant will be scheduled for an interview with the contracting superintendent or other representative designated by the Contracting Squadron Commander.

CONTRACTING'S ROLE

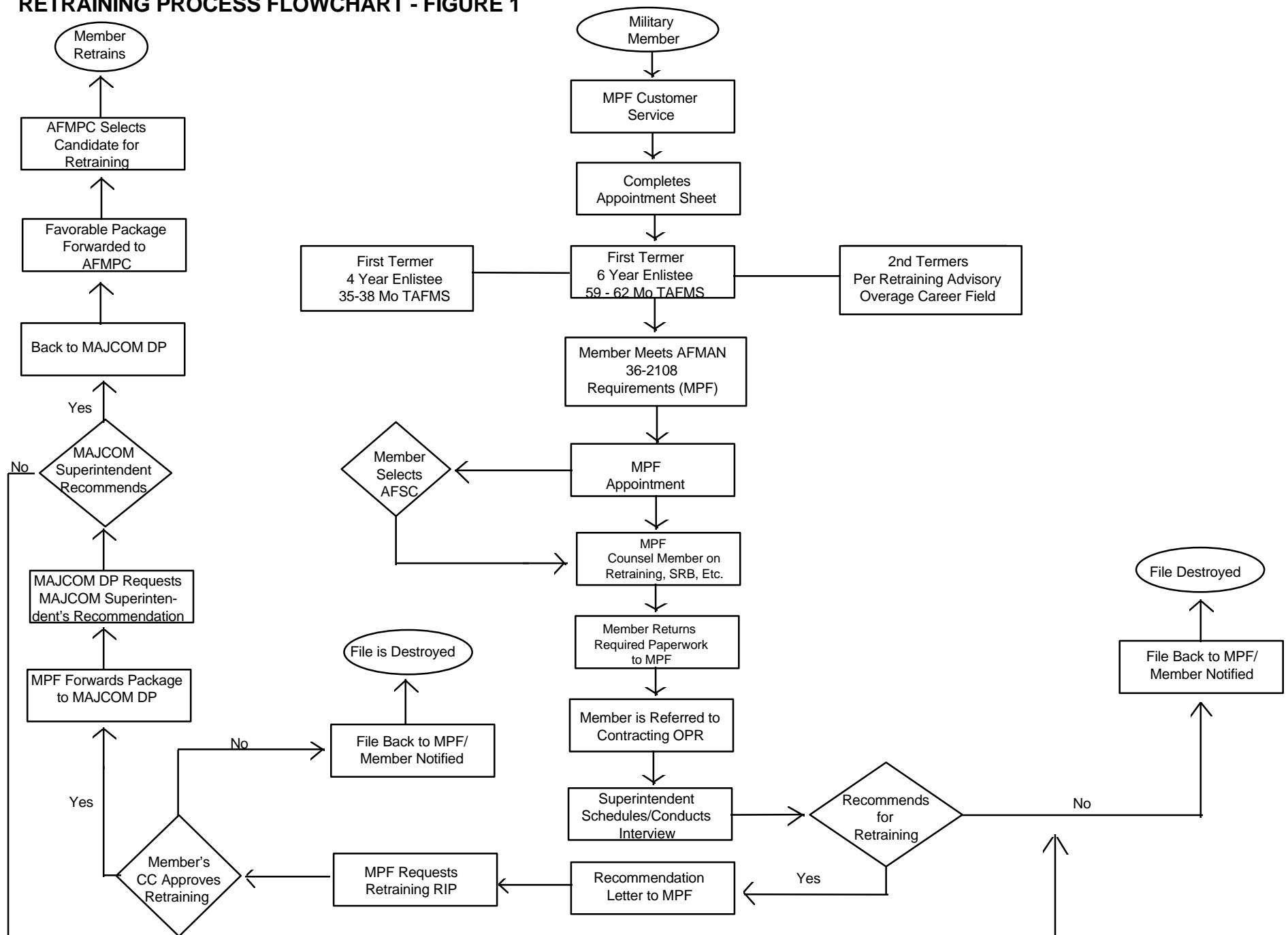
After the contracting superintendent interviews the candidate, he/she forwards a recommendation/non-recommendation letter to MPF's Personnel Employment Element (PEE), stating the reasons for recommending or not recommending the applicant. If the member qualifies for all the prerequisites and is recommended by contracting, PEE personnel will order a Retraining RIP. After the applicant signs the document, it is sent to his/her commander for approval. If the commander approves the retraining, the package is forwarded to MAJCOM DP, which will in turn request recommendation from the MAJCOM Contracting Superintendent. If the member is recommended, the package goes back to MAJCOM DP, which sends it to AFMPC. AFMPC then selects the candidate for retraining. See Page 5, Figure 1, Retraining Process Flowchart.

Upon recommending/non-recommending the individual, immediately contact your MAJCOM superintendent and fax a letter recommending approval or disapproval, copy of attachments 1 and 4, and all the documentation used to arrive at your decision. The letter should be as explicit as possible, and should include the rationale behind your decision. Do not use canned statements. The MAJCOM superintendent will use this information to make his/her recommendation.

Contact the applicant by phone and follow-up with a courtesy letter, stating your final decision. No specifics are necessary; however, be prepared to justify your decision in the event of an inquiry.

Certain restrictions apply to senior NCOs and Technical Sergeants aspiring to retrain into the contracting career field. It is SAF/AQC policy that Chief Master Sergeants and Senior Master Sergeants not be allowed to retrain into contracting. Master Sergeants will only be accepted with the approval of SAF/AQC. Technical Sergeants with less than 16 years of service will be permitted to apply.

RETRAINING PROCESS FLOWCHART - FIGURE 1



CHAPTER 3

PRE-INTERVIEW PHASE

Preparation is a key ingredient to the successful accomplishment of the interview. There are some things you can do prior to the interview to help make it more productive. We will examine a few of the more important items to consider when preparing for the interview in this chapter.

NOTIFICATION

Preparation for the interview should begin when notified by MPF that an applicant is considering retraining into the contracting career field. Remember, this notification may be a letter or phone call from your MPF. However, the candidate may come into your office unannounced requesting retraining. If this happens, he/she should be referred to MPF before any other actions occur. As a matter of courtesy, always remember to coordinate these interviews with your squadron commander.

INITIAL ACTIONS

Regardless of the method used, once notified of a member's interest in retraining, you should invite him/her to visit your office in order to accomplish some initial actions. The first of these actions is to give the candidate a resume/questionnaire to be filled out and returned at a specified time. (See Attachment 1 for a sample resume/questionnaire.) Then, you should schedule the interview, allowing sufficient time to gather all necessary information and ask any preliminary questions. Make it a point to ask the individual about his/her former duty assignments, so you can speak to their previous supervisors/commanders before the interview.

If you prefer to review an applicant's records prior to the interview, you may ask them to bring the records to your office on their first visit. This will allow you to review them with the candidate present and also give you the opportunity to identify areas requiring further clarification.

The records review is discussed in more detail in Chapter 5. Rationale for conducting the records review after the interview is based on avoiding the possibility of developing a biased opinion prior to interviewing. Questions arising from the interview can be answered by conducting a follow-up interview. Either approach will work; choose the one you feel most comfortable with.

LETTERS OF RECOMMENDATION

Recommendations by the member's current supervisor or commander should provide you with important facts about the applicant. Letters stating only "I highly recommend.....be allowed to retrain into contracting", are too imprecise and give no specific information on the candidate's character. An adequate letter of recommendation should at least answer some of the following questions:

- a. What is their general overall evaluation of the applicant?
- b. What are the applicant's principal strengths, outstanding successes, and significant failures in his/her job activities?
- c. How would they compare the applicant's performance to the performance of others with similar responsibilities?
- d. Does he/she work well with others?
- e. Does he/she know of anything that would indicate whether the applicant is unqualified to retrain into the contracting career field?
- f. Would he/she re-hire this person?

CHAPTER 4

SETTING OF THE INTERVIEW

LENGTH

All applicants should be allotted approximately the same amount of time to ensure consistency. Although the exact amount of time spent on the interview process will vary, you should have an approximate idea of your needs after a few interviews. Just remember to schedule the interview at a time that is convenient for both you and the applicant. This way, time will not become a disrupter.

LOCATION

All interviews should be planned and scheduled in advance to allow adequate preparation. Use the same setting for all applicants. The room should be as comfortable and private as possible. Regardless of the area chosen, prevent interruptions. Allow only critical issues to get through. Remove any obstacles which could become a physical or mental barrier to you or the interviewee during the session.

SEATING

Ensure the interviewee is comfortable. The seating arrangement should be the same for all applicants. Furthermore, the individual should be seated so that he/she can be readily observed and heard.

DOCUMENTATION

Although documentation is being addressed here, it applies to every step of the retraining process, and you should fully document everything that happens throughout the entire process. Remember, you'll need this documentation when it's time to make your recommendation. CAUTION: Be sure the applicant is aware of your need to take notes during the interview; however, don't get so wrapped up with writing that you forget to listen.

CHAPTER 5

CONDUCTING THE INTERVIEW

ESTABLISHING RAPPORT

One of the most important things to consider when structuring the meeting is establishing rapport. Your initial meeting with the applicant will probably take place sometime prior to the actual interview. Nevertheless, you have to acknowledge the fact the applicant will likely be nervous and a little apprehensive at the time of the interview.

Good rapport depends upon three factors: (1) the way in which the applicant is greeted; (2) the atmosphere of the room in which the interview is held; and (3) the tone set during the opening minutes of the interview. Your first goal should be to put the applicant at ease as quickly as possible. You can get off to a good start by personally going to the reception area and greeting the applicant warmly and enthusiastically, by name. Open the conversation with relaxed non controversial conversation to put the applicant at ease. Areas like weather, travel, sports, or recent local events can be supplemented by any informal ideas you pick up from reading the applicant's resume/questionnaire. The resume or questionnaire offers a good source of information for conversational questions. Showing an interest in one of the applicant's accomplishments or past jobs is flattering and will help put him/her at ease.

It would also be a good idea to give the applicant a tour of your facilities, pointing out some basic responsibilities of each area. Additionally, you should take a moment to explain the interview process and let the applicant know you will be reviewing his/her records at the conclusion of the interview, with their permission of course. (See Attachment 3 for a sample of records review authorization letter.) You should tell the applicant that failure to give access to their records will result in an automatic disapproval of the retraining package.

THE INTERVIEW

At this point, you should have received the candidate's resume/questionnaire, spoken to his/her previous supervisors/commanders, received letters of recommendation from his/her current supervisor/commander, and received authorization to review the personnel records.

Based on your review of the information already received, you should have a preliminary game plan for the interview. You should have a list of questions prepared and a basic agenda at hand with key areas requiring further explanation.

There is no formula to the interview process, so you must keep in mind that every interview is going to differ in some ways. In fact, in some cases, you may simply conduct the interview for the sole purpose of observing the applicant to evaluate desired characteristics. Attachment 2 contains a number of areas, questions, and general aspects which may help you find out who the best retraining candidates are. Look them over and modify them as required. But remember, your interview techniques should be consistent with all applicants. Additionally, you must recognize that besides being unique, every interview will be considerably subjective. Although we may not completely remove the subjectivity from the interview, we can make a more honest recommendation if we are aware of some of the subjective elements as we evaluate applicants. Let's look at some areas that we can easily observe during the interview.

Appearance

We have a governing regulation for appearance and all applicants should conform to the standards outlined in AFI 36-2903, Dress and Personal Appearance of Air Force Personnel. We should also consider our constant exposure to the civilian community and the image we would like to project..

Communications

- Speaking Ability - Observe the applicant to: determine ability to express his/her ideas so others can understand; use correct grammar and make appropriate use of words in communicating with others; question/listen effectively in order to clarify information as needed.

- Writing Ability - Ensure the interviewee is capable of communicating effectively in writing. There are tests administered by the education services branch at your base; however, time constraints may not permit their use. In this case, you may wish to give the applicant a list of four or five open questions and allow him/her to answer one or two in writing within a specified period of time (perhaps 10 to 15 minutes). See attachments 1 and 2 for suggested questions.

- Reading Ability - There are a few indicators available to assist in determining an applicant's reading ability. First there is the Air Force Reading Abilities Test (AFRAT) which is administered by the education office. Another indicator is a score of 70 or higher on the General portion of the Airman Qualification Examination (AQE) which relates to reading grade level. Still another way to determine reading abilities is to have the applicant read a paragraph or short clause and then briefly explain the intent or meaning in his/her own words.

CONCLUDING THE INTERVIEW

The conclusion should be pleasant and instructive. A summary of what has been discussed is always helpful. The applicant should be given an opportunity to ask questions and seek clarification before leaving. Additionally, thank the individual for his/her time and tell him/her what to expect in terms of a follow-up.

RECORDS REVIEW

After interviewing the member, you can go to MPF and review his/her records. Most of the information attainable through the records should have been covered during the interview, so this will be little more than a verification process. Areas to review and some considerations to give in those areas include:

Enlisted Performance Reports (EPRs)

- Ratings - Are low ratings result of a personality conflict or other non-apparent reason? What areas are the low ratings in? Are they justified? Do recent EPRs show improvement over low ratings in old ones? What words does the EPR provide about promotion potential?

- Past Levels of Responsibility - Has the candidate spent a long time as a supervisor or team chief? Could this impact on his/her decision to retrain into contracting?

- Self Improvement Efforts - Has he/she earned college credits; attended required PME courses in a timely manner; and participated in other self enrichment programs?

Awards/Decorations

Has he/she been nominated/selected for Amn/NCO of the quarter or other achievements?

CHAPTER 6

ANALYZING THE RESULTS

Now that you've gone through the process of collecting all pertinent information about the applicant, conducted the interview, reviewed his/her records and clarified all remaining questions or inconsistencies, it's time to give an overall evaluation of the applicant. **(To assist in making this evaluation, a Sample Rating Form has been included as Attachment 4.)**

Be as honest as possible when you rate the various factors contained on the Rating Form. The honesty expressed will of course be based on your opinion and probably in many cases, your gut feeling.

The evaluation is broken down into four categories:

- I. Supervisor/Commander Recommendations
- II. Resume/Questionnaire Responses
- III. Interview Results
- IV. Records Review

Each of the four categories helps determine an applicant's qualifications and abilities. At the conclusion of the process, it comes down to your recommending or not recommending the applicant for retraining. The purpose of this evaluation is to assist in making that recommendation.

Using the five-point scale included on the Rating Form and your best judgment, simply give the applicant a rating in each of the four categories. When you're through with the rating, you should have a very good idea on what your recommendation is going to be. Let's look at two completely hypothetical situations and see how we might handle them.

Situation 1

Airman Smith has completed all necessary requirements through MPF and you have asked him to stop by your office for some preliminary information at 1000 on Friday. Airman Smith arrives at 1030 with an excuse. You give Airman Smith a Resume/Questionnaire and request he complete and return it. Additionally you ask him to bring a letter of recommendation from his supervisor and commander to the interview, which is scheduled for 1400 on Wednesday of next week.

Airman Smith arrives at 1200 hrs on Wednesday and says he just likes to be early. You review his resume and discover only half of the questions are answered. The letter of recommendation indicates this is an applicant the organization will hate to be without. Results of the interview show Airman Smith has problems with writing and reading skills, has little self-confidence, and no clearly defined career goals. A review of his EPRs indicate consistently poor ratings in the Bearing and Behavior category.

The evaluation process should not take a lot of time in this case. A possible question mark on the recommendation; perhaps as high as a 2 on the resume/questionnaire; a strong 2 on the interview, and 1 or 2 for the records review.

Situation 2

Airman Jones completes all requirements through MPF and stops by your office at the scheduled time. She returns at the scheduled interview time with the resume/questionnaire completely filled out and letters of recommendation from supervisor and commander, both of which speak very highly of her. Results of the interview indicate she possesses excellent communication skills and prior test results show above average reading and comprehension levels. She handles herself in a very professional manner and has done much in the way of self improvement over the past two years. Review of her records indicates she is outstanding in all aspects.

Evaluation may not take long in this case either (in fact it should not take long in any case). Letters of recommendation may warrant a 5. Resume/questionnaire responses may be worth a strong 4; a possible 4 on the interview, and a strong 4 on the records review.

What does this evaluation do for you? It provides the basis for your recommendation and the necessary wording for completing it. Let's now move to the recommendation section and see how these two situations may be handled.

CHAPTER 7

RECOMMENDATIONS

Now that you have received the supervisors/commanders recommendation, reviewed the resume/questionnaire, conducted the interview, reviewed the applicant's records, and performed the evaluation; you should be ready to make your decision.

If you believe not recommending the individual for retraining is appropriate, as should be the case for Airman Smith, your documentation should reflect that decision. The same applies in Situation 2. It appears that Airman Jones should be an asset to the contracting field. Your recommendation should reflect the various elements that impacted your decision.

We've looked at an easily identifiable poor candidate in Situation 1 and a very good one in Situation 2, but let's consider those that fall somewhere in between, such as the applicant who has some high and some low marks. Again, your recommendation should be based on your evaluation of the candidate's application package and his/her potential.

In many cases, the aspirant may meet the minimum acceptable standards, but lack in your opinion, other desired attributes. If you don't feel comfortable recommending disapproval of the retraining application, talk to your commander, contact some of your peer superintendents, or call your Major Command Superintendent and discuss the situation before you write a recommendation. Your documentation should identify specific limitations or weak areas as well as positive ones.

If all else fails, and you still aren't sure how to make your recommendation, ask yourself a simple question, "**Would I want this applicant working for me in this office?**" A lot of times applicants approved for retraining remain at their present base.

Remember, MAJCOM Superintendents will normally base their decision heavily on your recommendation. Refrain from using canned statements on recommendations to command superintendents it makes it difficult for them to differentiate the good prospective retrainees from the outstanding ones. It is important they forward only the best to AFMPC for processing.

CHAPTER 8

ACQUISITION PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM (APDP)

As part of the implementation of the Defense Acquisition Workforce Improvement Act (P.L. 101-510), the Department of Defense established a Career Development Program for acquisition personnel. The Air Force policy implementing this program is called the Acquisition Professional Development Program (APDP). Both the law and APDP contain policies that significantly affect a person's career path and influence his/her career opportunities and decisions. These policies and laws are too complex to be covered in this guide, but the information below should help you understand APDP certification standards and award procedures, training, education, and other important issues that should be considered for retraining applicants.

Application:

APDP applies to officer, enlisted, and civilian personnel occupying acquisition positions and provides guidance relating to certification requirements in three career paths: contracting, purchasing, and procurement assistant. The two career paths pertaining to 6C0X1 personnel are contracting (applies to those performing acquisition functions above the simplified acquisition threshold) and purchasing (applies to those performing acquisition functions within the simplified acquisition threshold, to include micropurchases).

Requirements:

Both the contracting and purchasing career paths include three progressive levels of certification, with each level identifying the completion of specific training, education and experience requirements. Level I, or Basic Level is also known as Entry Level; Level II, or Intermediate Level, is also known as Journeyman Level, and Level III, or Advanced Level, is also known as Senior Level.

At the Basic or Entry Level, standards are designed to establish fundamental qualifications and expertise in the individual's career field. Development at the basic level lays the foundation for career progression and is designed to prepare qualified, motivated people for positions of increasing responsibility. At this level, trainees should be exposed to the functions of contracting and the roles of its various specializations.

At the Intermediate Level, specialization is initially emphasized. Development continues, including on-the-job rotational assignments, but the responsibilities and length of time an individual spends in each position generally increases. While specialization is emphasized at the beginning, the individual should later begin to broaden his/her background toward a more general expertise in the overall processes of his/her field.

At the Senior Level, the individual should have completed all the mandatory training and education requirements (or equivalents) of that level, and should have advanced through a career pattern that has given him/her depth of knowledge in his/her functional area and breadth of knowledge across the entire contracting process.

Acquisition personnel may not be assigned to an acquisition position unless they have been awarded a certification at least equal to the level of certification at which the position has been coded, or can obtain such a certification within 18 months of being assigned to the position. See figures 2 and 3 for checklists depicting APDP certification requirements.

Certification/Skill Level/Grade Association:

There are no required grades or required skill levels for any certification level. Any person who meets the training, education, and experience requirements can be certified up to and including Level III. However, at this time, because of the current backlog of acquisition personnel requiring training courses to meet Contracting Level III requirements, and because there are no enlisted personnel assigned to Contracting Level III positions, only CMSgts and CMSgt selectees are authorized to attend Contracting Level III training courses, unless a waiver is requested and is approved by SAF/AQC.

Satisfying APDP Educational Requirements:

A minimum of 24-semester credit hours of study in the following disciplines from an accredited institution of higher education is required for certification in the Contracting Career Path: accounting, business finance, law, contracts, purchasing, economics, industrial management, marketing, quantitative methods, and organization and management. Contracting personnel are strongly encouraged to use the CCAF to receive business-hour credit for attending Air Force contracting courses to satisfy the 24-hours of business requirement. Defense Acquisition University (DAU) contracting courses may also result in the allocation of business-hour credit through the College Level Examination Program (CLEP), and through the Defense Activity for Nontraditional Education Support (DANTES) program. Both programs offer opportunities to test your business knowledge.

It is very likely that the applicant will not be familiar with the intricacies of the contracting career field. We must make it a point to inform the candidates on what purchasing vs. contracting means. They will not just perform purchasing functions throughout their career, but will be expected to progress through the career path and assume responsibilities associated with all facets of the acquisition process. We should explain just what positions are included in the contracting career path. Although some of the charts included in this guide cover this to some degree, we need to look at the APDP program from the retrainee's perspective, and make sure they understand the challenges before them.

EDUCATION (Not mandatory, but desired)				
LEVEL I				
Sixteen (16) semester hours of undergraduate work, with emphasis in business				
LEVEL II				
Thirty-two (32) semester hours of undergraduate work, with emphasis in business				
LEVEL III				
Sixty-four (64) semester hours of undergraduate work, with emphasis in business				
EXPERIENCE				
Level I - One year of purchasing experience				
Level II - Two years of purchasing experience				
Level III - Three years of purchasing experience				
TRAINING				
LEVEL I				
<u>COURSE NAME</u> Purchasing Fundamentals or Operational Level Small Purchases	<u>COURSE #</u> PUR 101 PUR 102	<u>LOCATION</u> ALMC/Ft Lee AETC/WPAFB	<u>DURATION</u> 10 Days 19 Days	<u>SUBSTITUTES</u> ALMC-B3 G3AZR65130-004
LEVEL II				
Intermediate Purchasing	Pur 211	ALMC/Ft Lee	8 Days	ALMC-B4
LEVEL III				
None Required				

Figure 2 - Requirements to acquire a Purchasing Career Path Certification

Chapters 8 and 9 may be given as a handout to the retraining candidate. This information is key to their understanding of the educational and training requirements of the contracting career field.

EDUCATION (All levels)				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Twenty-four (24) hours in business or baccalaureate degree, or - Ten (10) years experience (as of 1 Oct 91), or - waiver, or - equivalency exam 				
EXPERIENCE				
Level I - One (1) year of contracting experience Level II - Two (2) years contracting experience Level III - Four (4) years of contracting experience				
TRAINING				
LEVEL I				
<u>COURSE NAME</u>	<u>COURSE #</u>	<u>LOCATION</u>	<u>DURATION</u>	<u>SUBSTITUTES</u>
Contract Fundamentals (MDAC Basic)	CON 101	ALMC/Ft Lee	20 Days	CON 102, 103
Contract Pricing (Principles of Contracting)	CON 104	AFIT/WPAFB	14 Days	CON 104,105,106
LEVEL II				
Government Contract Law	CON 201	AFIT/WPAFB	10 Days	N/A
Intermediate Pre-Award Contracting (MDAC Advanced) or Intermediate Post-Award Contracting (Adv Cont Admin)	CON 211 CON 221	ALMC/Ft Lee AFIT/WPAFB	14 Days 10 Days	CON 222, 223 CON 222, 223
Intermediate Pricing	CON 231	AFIT/WPAFB	14 Days	N/A
Automated Information Systems (Acquisition of Info Resources)	CON 241	ALMC/Ft Lee	8 Days	N/A
LEVEL III				
Executive Contracting (Contracting Executive Seminar)	CON 301	ASN Crystal City	5 Days	N/A
Executive Pre-Award Contracting (MDAC Executive) or Exec Post-Award Cont Admin (Contract Admin Exec)	CON 311 CON 321	ALMC/Ft Lee AFIT/WPAFB	5 Days 5 Days	N/A N/A
Executive Cost & Price Analysis (Advanced Contract Pricing)	CON 331	AFIT/WPAFB	10 Days	N/A
PROFESSIONAL MILITARY EDUCATION - Desired				
Level I - None Level II - Airman (or NCO) Leadership School Level III - Senior NCO Academy				

Figure 3 - Requirements to acquire a Contracting Career Path Certification.

CHAPTER 9

CAREER FIELD EDUCATION AND TRAINING CHARTS

The following charts provide a synoptic view of the contracting enlisted force career path, and the education and training paths. Figure 4 shows the path the “typical” contracting enlisted member would follow during the course of his/her contracting career. Figure 5 outlines when training is required for each skill level and function within this specialty, also the average sew-on time for the contracting career field.

CONTRACTING ENLISTED FORCE CAREER PATH

<u>RANK/GRAD E</u>	<u>POSITION</u>	<u>SKILL LEVEL</u>	<u>PURCHASIN G APDP 1,2,3</u>	<u>CONTRACTIN G APDP 1,2,3</u>	<u>WARRAN T ELIGIBLE</u>
AB/E-1	Student Purchasing Agent (Apprentice)	1-3	0-1	N/A	N/A
AMN/E-2	Purchasing Agent (Apprentice)	3	1	N/A	N/A
AIC/E-5	Purchasing Agent (Apprentice)	3	2	N/A	N/A
SRA/E-4	Purchasing Agent/Contract Specialist (Journeyman)	5	2-3	1	N/A
SSGT/E-5	Contract Specialist (Craftsman)	5-7	N/A	1-2	Yes - Simplified Acquisition Threshold
TSGT/E-6	Contract Specialist (Craftsman)	7	N/A	1-2	Yes - Simplified Acquisition Threshold
MSGT/E-7	Contract Specialist (Craftsman) Superintendent/ First Sergeant	7	N/A	1-2	Yes
SMSGT/E-8	Contract Specialist (Superintendent) Superintendent/ First Sergeant	9	N/A	2	Yes
CMSGT/E-9	Superintendent/First Sergeant/MAJCOM Supt/ Chief Contracting Enlisted Policy	CEM	N/A	2-3	Yes

Figure 4

CONTRACTING EDUCATION AND TRAINING PATH

BASIC MILITARY TRAINING SCHOOL	MANDATORY
APPRENTICE TECHNICAL SCHOOL - 3-Skill Level	MANDATORY
UPGRADE TO JOURNEYMAN - 5 Skill Level	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Six months duty position/apprentice experience is required before entering journeyman training (three months with supervisor's approval) - Minimum twelve (12) months OJT - Complete 5-Level CDC's - SrA sewn on 	
AIRMAN LEADERSHIP SCHOOL (ALS)	
Attendance is limited to SSgt selectees or those attaining 48 months Total Active Federal Military Service (TAFMS) and who have not been selected for promotion to SSgt. Completion is mandatory before assuming the rank of SSgt.	
UPGRADE TO CRAFTSMAN - 7 Skill Level	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Upon selection to SSgt - Eighteen (18) months OJT - Attendance at formal 7-Level School - Must be a 7-Level to sew-on TSgt 	
NONCOMMISSIONED OFFICER ACADEMY (NCOA)	
Attendance is limited to TSgts or TSgt selectees. Completion is mandatory before assuming the rank of MSgt.	
USAF SENIOR NONCOMMISSIONED OFFICER ACADEMY (SNCOA)	
Attendance is limited to SMSgts and MSgts. Completion is mandatory before assuming the rank of CMSgt.	
UPGRADE TO SUPERINTENDENT - 9 Skill Level	
Minimum rank of SMSgt. Must be graduate of resident SNCOA.	

AVERAGE SEW-ON TIME			
RANK	EARLIEST	AVERAGE	HYT
SrA	28 Months	36 Months	10 Years
SSgt	36 Months	6.94 Years	20 Years
TSgt	5.0 Years	12.87 Years	20 Years
MSgt	8.0 Years	15.97 Years	24 Years
SMSgt	11 Years	20.09 Years	26 Years
CMSgt	14 Years	21.04 Years	30 Years

Figure 5

ATTACHMENT 1

(SAMPLE RESUME/QUESTIONNAIRE)

The following sample resume/questionnaire is provided as an aid, not as a standard document. Tailor it to your needs. Use the suggested questions provided on attachment 2 to complement this document. Remember, if you want to ensure the candidate completes this form without outside assistance, have him answer all (or some) of the questions, in writing, within a specific amount of time, during the interview. Some of the suggested questions lend themselves to written answers, while an oral answer would be more beneficial for others. By alternating this group of questions, you should get a good picture of both the individual's writing skills and speaking abilities.

Instructions to applicant :

- Handwritten responses are required.
- Please use a pen and make sure your responses are legible.
- Please prepare this alone, and without the assistance of others.
- Please provide honest answers to all questions.
- Please keep your responses brief.

Name/Rank : _____

Address _____

Current AFSC: _____

Education - PME/College/Other:

Identify any special awards/decorations/citations or other types of recognition gained throughout your career.

Briefly describe your Air Force career to this point.

Briefly explain your career goals from this point on.

Is your decision to retrain out of your current career field: (circle one)

Voluntary / Involuntary

Why?

What influenced you to choose contracting as a replacement for your current field?

Based on your knowledge of the contracting field, what are your job expectations?

Do you have any public speaking experience? (circle one)

Yes / No

If yes, briefly explain what experience you've had .

Do you have typing experience? (circle one)

Yes / No

Do you have any computer background or training? (circle one)

Yes / No

If yes, briefly explain what experience you've had, including hardware/software.

Briefly describe what you believe to be your strengths and your weaknesses.

To the best of my knowledge, the above information is accurate.

Signature of applicant

(Date)

ATTACHMENT 2

KEY AREAS/RELEVANT QUESTIONS

The following list of **key areas** of observation and relevant questions is provided as a guide for your interview process. Modify them as required for each specific situation.

EDUCATION

Consider general education, school examinations passed, etc.

Check how far is the candidate from satisfying APDP educational requirements. In what ways does he/she feel he/she may further his/her education from this point?

How does he/she plan to go about this?

When addressing this area, the interviewer must look at the amount of college hours completed by the candidate, how many of those areas are in the business disciplines required by APDP, and what plans does he/she have to complete the 24 hour business requirement.

EXPERIENCE

Has he/she done work of a kind similar to contracting?

How does he/she think his/her experience at his/her current job will be useful in contracting?

How will he/she compensate for his/her lack of experience in contracting?

What things does he/she find least satisfying on his/her current job?

SPECIAL APTITUDES

Does he/she have knowledge of a foreign language, spoken or written, and to what level of proficiency?

Does he/she possess any other knowledge or skill he/she may think would be useful in contracting?

DISPOSITION

Does he/she tend to be:

Confident

Sociable

Dependent

Persuasive

Difficult

Excitable

Passive

Withdrawn

Forceful

Calm

Arrogant

INTEREST/AIM

Find out what the candidate's dominating interests and aims are, especially in relation to his/her work.

To what extent has he/she become personally identified with any job he/she has done previously?

PHILOSOPHY

How would he/she describe his/her general philosophy of life?

What reputation would he/she like to have as an employee?

WORK

In considering retraining into contracting, what things did he/she look for?

What would he/she like to avoid in his/her next job?

What compliments, awards, etc., have he/she received for his/her good work?

FUTURE GOALS

What type of position would he/she like to be in, several years from now? Why?

How does he/she intend to go about achieving this goal?

How does he/she see contracting fitting into his/her future plans?

How will it give him/her what he/she wants?

What might make him/her leave the contracting career field?

How does contracting relate to his/her long term plans?

Consider the applicant's supervisory background and future desires. Impress upon the retrainee that, due to APDP prerequisites to filling supervisory positions, the likelihood of supervisory responsibilities will be slim, at least for the first few years. This can create problems for some who have been occupying supervisory positions throughout their military careers, or someone who is looking to retrain into contracting with the primary purpose of becoming a supervisor. This will also give them an idea of the impact APDP will have on their contracting career.

Also, Inform the retrainee of the recent cut-off scores to get promoted in the Contracting Career Field. Some people looking to retrain for the wrong reasons may eliminate themselves from consideration after obtaining this information.

INTERPERSONAL SKILLS

How does he/she get along with other people?

What experience does he/she have in dealing with customers?

Does he/she prefer to work on a team or by himself/herself?

To what extent does he/she set an example for others?

How does he/she react to feedback on his/her performance?

COMMUNICATIONS

Does the candidate have difficulty in expressing himself/herself?

To what extent does the interviewee express himself/herself warmly and spontaneously?

How much does he/she use the phone on his/her day-to-day work?

How effective is he/she in persuading people to his/her point of view?

MOTIVATION

Does the applicant give evidence of having the energy and driving force to attain his/her objectives?

What appears to be his/her main reasons for undertaking whatever work he/she has done before, and what seem to have been his/her chief sources of satisfaction/disgruntlement in it?

GENERAL

What does he/she think are his/her greatest strengths?

What does he/she think are his/her greatest weaknesses?
How has he/she reacted to changes in the past?
What effect does pressure have on him/her?

These are just a few of the many areas/questions you could address to retraining candidates. They are included as points of reference and do not represent absolutes.

ATTACHMENT 3

SAMPLE RECORDS REVIEW AUTHORIZATION LETTER

Date

MEMORANDUM FOR MPF CUSTOMER SUPPORT ELEMENT

FROM:

SUBJECT: AUTHORIZATION FOR RECORDS REVIEW

I, _____ hereby give _____
Name, Grade, Duty Phone Interviewer

authorization to review my records to determine my eligibility for retraining into
the Contracting Career Field.

Applicant's Signature

ATTACHMENT 4

SAMPLE RATING FORM

NAME: _____ GRADE _____

SSAN: _____ ORGANIZATION: _____

PAFSC: _____ DOR: _____ TAFMS: _____ DOS: _____

DATE OF INTERVIEW: _____

RATING SCALE

1	2	3	4	5
POOR	FAIR	AVERAGE	GOOD	EXCELLENT

RATING FACTOR

RATING

I. SUPERVISOR/COMMANDER RECOMMENDATIONS

Analysis of recommendations by superiors; interpersonal relations; attributes _____

II. RESUME/QUESTIONNAIRE RESPONSES

Overall analysis of responses; questions answered completely and concisely; followed directions. _____

RATING SCALE

1	2	3	4	5
POOR	FAIR	AVERAGE	GOOD	EXCELLENT

RATING FACTOR

RATING

III. INTERVIEW

A. APPEARANCE: Physical appearance, grooming and manners, are

within appropriate standards and are appropriate for a professional person.

B. COMMUNICATIONS ABILITY:

SPEAKING: Speaks in clear, articulate manner; demonstrates command of vocabulary; easily understood; makes concise, to the point statements.

WRITING: Demonstrates ability to effectively express ideas in writing; uses correct spelling grammar; thoughts are well organized.

READING: Demonstrates command of vocabulary; able to read and comprehend at a mature level.

C. CAREER GOALS: Well defined; realistic.

D. POISE/COMPOSURE: Carries and presents self in professional manner; shows high degree of self-confidence.

E. OBJECTIVITY: Demonstrates ability to respond without personal bias; evidence of being trustworthy and reliable.

F. EDUCATION/TRAINING: Shows interest in self-enrichment through off-duty education in addition to PME and technical training.

RATING SCALE

1	2	3	4	5
POOR	FAIR	AVERAGE	GOOD	EXCELLENT

RATING FACTOR

RATING

IV. **RECORDS REVIEW**

A. EPR RATINGS: Consistently high; Overall 4s or 5s on last three EPRs. _____

B. LEVELS OF RESPONSIBILITY: Commensurate with grade; Supervisory positions. _____

C. AWARDS/DECORATIONS: Given recognition for achievements. _____

D. ACQUISITION PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM: Ability/desire of the retrainee to obtain APDP certification _____

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS :